

Frank Weltner Presents...

This Scholarly Library of Facts about Domestic & Worldwide Zionist
Criminality

Jew Watch

The Jew Watch Project Is The Internet's Largest Scholarly Collection of
Articles on Zionist History

Free Educational Library for Private Study, Scholarship, Research & News
About Zionism

We Reveal Zionist Banksters, News Falsifiers, PR Liars, Neocons, Subversives,
Terrorists, Spies & More

The Jew Watch Project's 1.5 Billion Pages Served Demonstrate Our Focus on
Professionalism

An Oasis of News for Americans Who Presently Endure the Hateful Censorship
of Zionist Occupation



Zionist Leon Trotsky
of the Zionist USSR

[Top:](#) [Jewish Atrocities:](#) [The Lavon Affair Folder:](#) [Overview](#)

This article appeared freely on the Internet on June 1, 2006 at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lavon_Affair#Operation_Suzannah and is archived here for scholarship, research, education, and personal use by those previously requesting it in accordance with the "fair use" provision in Title 17 of the copyright law.

Lavon Affair



Pinhas
Lavon

The **Lavon Affair** refers to the scandal over a failed Israeli [covert operation](#) in [Egypt](#) known as **Operation Suzannah**, in which U.S. and U.K. targets in Egypt were bombed and evidence left implicating the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood; a textbook example of a [false flag](#) operation.

It became known as the **Lavon Affair** after the Israeli defense minister [Pinhas Lavon](#), who was forced to resign because of the incident, or [cryptically](#) as **The Unfortunate Affair** ([Hebrew](#): העסק הביש *HaEsek HaBish*),

Operation Suzannah

In the early 1950s the [United States](#) began pressuring the [British](#) to withdraw from the [Suez Canal](#), abandoning two operative treaties, the [Convention of Constantinople](#) and the [Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936](#) that made the canal a neutral zone under British control. Israel was strongly opposed to the British withdrawal, as it feared that it would remove a moderating effect on [Nasser's](#) military ambitions, especially toward Israel, but diplomatic methods failed to sway the British. In the summer of [1954](#) Colonel Benyamin Gibli, the chief of Israel's military intelligence ([Aman](#)), initiated *Operation Suzannah* in order to reverse that decision. The goal of the Operation was to carry out bombings and other acts of sabotage in Egypt with the aim of creating an atmosphere in which the British and American opponents of British withdrawal from Egypt would be able to gain the upper hand and block the withdrawal.^{[1](#)}

The top-secret cell, Unit 131, which was to carry out the operation had existed since 1948 and under Aman since 1950. At the time of Operation Suzannah, Unit 131 was the subject of a bitter dispute between Aman and [Mossad](#) over who should control it.

Unit 131 operatives had been recruited several years before, when the Israeli intelligence officer Avram Dar arrived in [Cairo](#) under a British cover. He had recruited several Egyptian Jews who had previously been active in illegal emigration activities and trained them for [covert operations](#).

Aman decided to activate the network in the spring of 1954. On [July 2](#), a [post office](#) in [Alexandria](#) was firebombed, and on [July 14](#), the U.S. Information Agency libraries in Alexandria and [Cairo](#), and a British-owned theater were bombed. The bombs themselves were homemade, consisting of bags containing acid placed over [nitroglycerine](#). The bombs were inserted into books, and placed on the shelves of the libraries just before closing time. Several hours later, as the acid ate through the bags, the bombs would explode. They did little damage to the targets and caused no injuries or deaths. Egyptian authorities arrested one suspect, Robert Dassa, when his bomb accidentally ignited prematurely in his pocket. Having searched his apartment, they found incriminating evidence and names of accomplices to the operation. Several suspects were arrested, including Egyptian Jews and undercover Israelis.



The trial against those arrested lasted until [January 27, 1955](#), when two of the accused ([Moshe Marzouk](#) and Shmuel Azar) were condemned to execution by hanging, two were acquitted, and the rest received lengthy prison terms. One suspect was tortured to death in prison, and another one had committed suicide. Israeli agent Avraham Seidenberg (Avri Elad, alias Paul Frank) had managed to escape.

The trial was criticized as a show trial, and there were credible allegations that evidence had been extracted by torture.

The imprisoned operatives were eventually freed in 1967, in a secret addendum to a POW exchange.

Soon after the affair, Mossad chief [Isser Harel](#) expressed suspicion to Aman concerning the integrity of Avri Elad. Despite his concerns, Aman continued using Elad for intelligence operations until 1956, when he was caught trying to sell Israeli documents to the Egyptians. Elad was tried and sentenced to 10

years imprisonment. In 1980, Harel publically revealed evidence that Elad had been turned by the Egyptians even before Operation Suzannah. If true, this would imply that Egyptian Intelligence was aware of the operation from the beginning

Political aftermath

In meetings with prime minister [Moshe Sharett](#), secretary of defense Pinhas Lavon denied any knowledge of the operation. When intelligence chief Gibli contradicted Lavon, Sharrett commissioned a board of inquiry consisting of [Israeli Supreme Court](#) Justice [Isaac Olshan](#) and the first chief of staff of the [Israel Defense Forces](#), [Yaakov Dori](#) that was unable to find conclusive evidence that Lavon had authorized the operation. Lavon tried to fix the blame on [Shimon Peres](#), who was the secretary general of the defense ministry, and Gibli for [insubordination](#) and [criminal negligence](#). Sharett resolved the dilemma by siding with Peres, after which Lavon resigned. Former [prime minister](#) [David Ben-Gurion](#) succeeded Lavon as minister of defense.

In April of [1960](#), a review of minutes from the inquiry found inconsistencies and possibly a fraudulent document in Gibli's original testimony that seemed to support Lavon's account of events. During this time, it also came to light that Seidenberg (the Israeli agent running Operation Suzannah in Egypt), had committed perjury during the original inquiry. Seidenberg was also suspected of betraying the group to Egyptian authorities; though the charges were never proven, he was eventually sentenced to a jail term of 10 years. Ben-Gurion scheduled closed hearings with a new board of inquiry chaired by [Chaim Cohen](#), a supreme court justice.

This inquiry found that the perjury indeed had been committed, and that Lavon had not authorized the operation. Sharett and [Levi Eshkol](#) tried to issue a statement that would placate both Lavon and those who had opposed him. Ben-Gurion refused to accept the compromise and viewed it as a divisive play within the [Mapai](#) party. After another investigative committee sided with the Cohen inquiry, Ben-Gurion resigned from his post as defense minister. This led to the expulsion of Lavon from the [Histadrut](#) labor union and an early call for new elections which changed the political structure in Israel.

It should be noted that the specifics of Operation Suzannah were not public at the time of the political upheaval.

Legacy

While Israeli concerns about Nasser's military ambitions turned out to have some merit, Operation Suzannah and the Lavon Affair turned out to be disastrous for Israel in several ways:

- The Egyptian government used the trial as a pretext for a series of efforts to punish Egyptian Jews culminating in [1956](#) when, following the [Suez Crisis](#), 25,000 Jews were expelled by Egypt and at least 1,000 ended up in [prisons](#) and [detention camps](#).
- Israel lost significant standing and credibility in its relations with the [United Kingdom](#) and the United States that would take years to repair.
- The tactics of the operation led to deep-seated suspicion of Israeli intelligence methods, such as [agent provocateurs](#) and [false flag](#)

operations.

- The political aftermath caused considerable political turmoil in Israel that affected the influence of its government.

See also

- [History of Israel](#) (under "Lavon affair")
- [Moshe Marzouk](#)

Notes

- [Note 1](#): According to historian Shabtai Teveth, who wrote one of the more detailed accounts, the assignment was "To undermine Western confidence in the existing [Egyptian] regime by generating public insecurity and actions to bring about arrests, demonstrations, and acts of revenge, while totally concealing the Israeli factor. The team was accordingly urged to avoid detection, so that suspicion would fall on the Muslim Brotherhood, the Communists, 'unspecified malcontents' or 'local nationalists'." (Ben-Gurion's Spy, Columbia University Press, 1996, p. 81)

References

- I. Black and B. Morris, "Israel's Secret Wars". Futura, 1992.
- S. Teveth, "Ben-Gurion's Spy". Columbia University Press, 1996.
- Ostrovsky, Victor and Hoy, Claire. *By Way of Deception*. St. Martin's Press, 1991. [ISBN 0312926146](#)

**Archived for Educational Purposes only Under U.S.C. Title 17 Section 107
by Jew Watch Library at www.jewwatch.com**

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

In accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107, any copyrighted work in the Jew Watch Library is archived here under fair use without profit or payment to those who have expressed a prior interest in reviewing the included information for personal use, non-profit research and educational purposes only.

Ref. <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml>

If you have additions or suggestions

[Email Jew Watch](#)